

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. In a television network environment, a method for selectively storing targeted advertisements at a set-top box,
5 the method comprising:

receiving an advertisement channel having a plurality of advertisements;

determining if an advertisement is appropriate for the set-top box; and

10 retaining the advertisement if it is found to be appropriate.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining is performed in real-time or near real-time.

15 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing the plurality of advertisements from the ad channel on a hard-drive prior to said determining.

20 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising deleting the advertisement from the hard drive if the advertisement is found to be inappropriate.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining is based on one or more pre-determined parameters.

5 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving includes receiving one or more targeted advertisements via the advertisement channel.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
10 assigning each advertisement within the ad channel a unique AD_ID;
assigning each set-top box to one or more groups;
forming an AD_ID group table;
forming an STB-group table; and
15 joining the AD_ID table and STB-AD_ID table to create a master STB-AD_ID table.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said determination is based on the STB-AD_ID table.

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9. The method of claim 7, wherein the STB-AD_ID table comprises an STB-MAC_ID column and an AD_ID column.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the AD_ID group table
5 comprises an AD_ID column and a targeted group identification column.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the STB-group table
10 comprises an STB-MAC_ID table and a targeted group identification column.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving includes receiving metadata via the advertisement channel.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the metadata is
15 transmitted in a vertical blanking interval.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving includes receiving the metadata and splice_timing information via the
20 advertisement channel.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the metadata and the splice_timing information is encoded as a data service on the advertisement channel.

5 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising decoding the data service and identifying the timing of the advertisement from the splice_timing information.

10 17. The method of claim 16, wherein said retaining includes storing the advertisement during one or more splice windows identified by the splice_timing information.

18. In a television network environment, an advertisement management system comprising:

15 an advertisement channel generator for receiving one or more advertisements and their corresponding metadata information from an advertisement server, and generating an advertisement channel comprising the advertisements and the metadata information; and

20 a set-top box for receiving the advertisement channel and retrieving the advertisements and the metadata information.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the set-top box comprises a demodulator or decoder for demodulating or decoding the advertisement channel to differentiate between the metadata information and the advertisements.

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20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the set-top box further comprises a processor for decoding the metadata information to determine one or more corresponding instructions.

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21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the processor further associates the instructions to the received advertisements to select one or more appropriate advertisements.

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22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the set-top box further comprises a memory for storing the selected advertisements.

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23. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the advertisement channel generator further comprises a vertical blanking interval encoder for encoding metadata information on an advertisement channel.

24. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising an advertisement sequencer/multiplexer for multiplexing the advertisements on the advertisement channel.